The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters of direct interest occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WHOLE NO. 1514 | WILLIAM GREEN, President | WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 1940 | GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer | VOL. 30, NO. 16

FACING the FACTS

With PHILIP PEARL

Of all the stupid and arrogant statements emanating from the CIO during the protracted public debate on the issue of amending the National Labor Relations Act, the one attributed by the Washington Post this week to Joseph Kovner, assistant general counsel for the CIO, takes the prize.

"Kovner questioned the ability of Congress to enact reasonable amendments," said the newspaper in describing a meeting on the subject held by the Washington Lawyers Guild.

Fortunately for the meetings of the Guild, Chester Ward, labor law expert for Washington University, promptly responded that if Congress could not enact reasonable amendments to this or any other law "there is no no sense to democratic government."

But the effrontery of Kovner's remark aptly illustrates the Stalinist philosophy of the CIO which is being guided by Lee Pressman, brain-trustee for John L. Lewis.

It is the contempt with which the CIO Communists regard the democratic, legislative processes of this country and it gives away their hand in opposing all amendments to the Act.

The American Federation of Labor believes not only that Congress can and should enact reasonable amendments to the Act but also that it already has taken a strong, positive step in that direction by the House Labor Committee's approval of the Norton amendments, which are fully endorsed by the A. F. of L.

What the Norton Bill Means

This bill covers only three pages in large print. It makes only four changes in the law as it stands. The language is clear and simple. You don't have to be a lawyer to understand it. There are no trick jokers attached to any of these amendments. They go directly to the heart of the present weaknesses of the Act. They provide constructively for better administration of the law. They provide constructively for fairer administration of the law. There is nothing in this reasonable bill to which any fair-minded, sensible person can object.

As to three of these four amendments there cannot possibly be any dispute. The one which would increase the membership of the Board from three to five by the appointment of two new members by the President of the United States is designed to change the complexion of the present board. It is urged when we look at those cases, there was not a single one of the Labor Board and its record of gross maladministration, we are yet to find him. The members of the present board cannot even agree among themselves. Scarcely an important decision comes before them which doesn't split three ways. And the newest member of the Board, Dr. Leiserson, has spent some time before Congressional committees severely criticizing the policies of his colleagues.

The second amendment would permit employers who are caught in the middle of a union dispute to petition the board to hold an election so they can tell whom they are legally obligated to bargain with. There is practically universal unanimity on the need for such an amendment.

The third amendment simply says that contracts between labor organizations and employers shall not exceed one year, at least a year.

New York Shows the Way

It is only when we come to the final amendment that controversy raises its head and, strangely enough, there are fewer grounds for objection to this amendment than any other.

This fourth amendment to the Norton bill would amend Section 9(b) of the present law by adding the following language:

"Provided, however, that in any case where the majority of employes of a particular craft shall so decide the Board shall designate such craft as a unit appropriate for the purpose of collective bargaining."

As Secretary-Treasurer George Meany aptly points out this amendment is taken word for word from the New York State Labor Relations Act which has been in force for three years. How has it operated there? Let us see. The records show that the New York State Labor Relations Board had dispensed of 1,700 cases by April 1. In all those cases, there was not a single contest or objection based on this provision in the law either before the Board or before the courts. The CIO unions in New York are satisfied with this collective bargaining unit provision. The A. F. of L. unions are also satisfied. No difficulties of any kind have been encountered in the administration and interpretation of this provision in three whole years.

Now let us see what has happened in the national scene under the National Labor Relations Act. Without this added language in the law, the National Labor Relations Board has repeatedly tried to destroy craft unions and no other single feature of the law has aroused more bitter controversy than the collective bargaining unit provision.

It seems to us, this comparison speaks eloquently of the need for following New York State's example.

The Great National Pastime

(The following is reprinted from Shirley Povich's sports column in the Washington Post)

A mild executive suggestion to baseball magnates today: We men who run the mills value baseball highly. If we can get our folks interested in ball games, they are less interested in communism and radicalism and strikes. And the best balls teams are the least labor troubles. There is rarely unrest where there is a good baseball team. Maintenance of a ball team is part of the legitimate expense. It's a guarantee against labor agitators gaining a foothold among our workers. Without baseball, we'd have our troubles."

The mill teams, in fact, pay better wages to their ball players than the organized leagues in the State. Two years ago the Charlotte club of the Piedmont League bought a first baseman named Dan Amaral from Winston-Salem. Three days later, Charlotte sold Amaral back to Winston-Salem. Later it developed that Amaral had signed with the Kannapolis Mills, maker of Cannon towels. He quit to Charlotte but had been intercepted by the mill team manager and given a salary of $300 a month, twice as much as he would have received at Charlotte.

That's the way these baseball teams work. They are unhampered by the salary limits of organized ball. In the Class B Piedmont League, the average player receives $150 a month. The mill towns in a Class D league are supposed to have a $1,200 a month salary limit for all of their club, but they are apt to pay a player $100 a month for playing ball and $200 a month for taking a soft job at the mill.

Pegler And The Press

(The following editorial is reprinted from the Wichita Beacon. It has also been printed in the Cooperative Builder.)

Believing that every writer should be given the widest possible latitude, and that suppression is not the solution of any problem, the Beacon has continued the publication of columns by Westbrook Pegler, on which this newspaper strongly disagrees. Apparently Pegler believes he has been given some divine appointment to act as the avenging angel of the people of the United States, and that it is up to him to right every wrong, reform the entire country, and make it the kind of a place in which he would like to live.

Of course, there are many things which are wrong, and there is no doubt that there is much in the country that can be criticized, and there undoubtedly is room for criticism on the subjects which have drawn Pegler's attention, but there is no earthly reason why any one should be subjected to abuse at everyone. Pegler starts his column almost every day with a tirade against somebody. He should be one of the first to realize he cannot run his private opinions down the throats of everybody.

Almost everyone in the United States knows that William Green is honest, truthful, and that he has devoted his time and energy not only in helping labor but in promoting the general welfare of the country. Of course, there are rascals in his organization, just as there would be rascals in every organization as large as the A. F. of L. But that does not mean that Mr. Green condones such rascals, nor do they have his consent to do the things for which they and he are criticized.

Westbrook Pegler is an able writer, one of the best newspaperman in the United States, and has a lot of unearned ability in the pan. Instead of constant criticism he could point out some of the fine points of a country in which he is still suffering freedom of the press to permit him to say what he pleases. Pegler should not take advantage of that freedom to constantly harass other men and, by his ability to use the English language, to attempt to tear down the good work they are doing.

Evidently his recent vacation did him no good. His friends and well-wishers, of whom there are many among Beacon readers, sincerely hoped that his rest would settle his nerves and calm whatever disorder had upset his thoughts. Since the climate of Florida was not successful we can only hope that time will effect a cure and that, eventually, reason and logic will regain control of his mind and he will devote his ability again to some constructive subjects.

MAKE NORTON BILL LAW, BROWN URGES

Amendments Held Necessary To Protect Rights of Workers.

Washington, D. C.—H. W. Brown, international president of the International Association of Machinists, urged members of Congress to give one hundred per cent support to the amendments to the National Labor Relations Act contained in the bill introduced by Chairman Norton of the House Labor Committee and favorably reported by the committee.

Pointing out that the International Association of Machinists has had a very large number of cases before the Labor Board and is consequently in an excellent position to judge the merits of amendments to the Act Mr. Brown said that labor Relations Act as a vital force for industrial peace.

"Malicious forces are stirring up opposition to the Norton Bill for the sole purpose of inspiring the adoption of sweeping crippling amendments. The adoption of the Norton Bill will end this rear guard action on the Act.

"The charge now being hysterically made that the so-called craft amendment will weight the representation provision of the Labor Act in favor of craft unions is the sheerest poppycock encouraged by designing men who could not gain advantage through depriving important groups of workers of their right to self determination. All the amendment would do is to provide these workers with a vote so that they can decide for themselves the type of representation unit they want, whether craft, industrial or otherwise.

"Certainly no organization based on democratic principles can object to a provision and the right of free choice, rather than the principle of majority rule and denial of rights of representation, can object to giving craft workers a vote on the type of unit they desire."

TELEGRAPHERS REJECT CIO FAKE UNITY PLAN

Communist Party Controls the ACA, Powers Declares.

Chicago, Ill.—The Commercial Telegraphers' Union, affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, will ignore the most recent request of the American Communications Association, CIO, for a meeting to discuss "unity committee" to discuss unity between the two organizations, Frank M. Powers, president announced. The ACA is holding its fifth annual convention in Chicago this week.

Charging that the Communists seek to capture the communications systems of the United States through the American Communications Association and that the ACA is aided materially and financially in this subversive purpose by John L. Lewis and the CIO, Mr. Powers said:

"So long as the Communist Party controls the ACA, there is it now does through Mervyn Rathborne, Roy Pyle and scores of Party hacks, the Commercial Telegraphers' Union can have nothing in common to discuss.

"The American Communications Association is the new names for the American Radio Telegraphers' Association, which was launched by the Communist Party in 1932 to capture America communications. We were warned by Rathborne in 1931, when he was attempting to organize radio officers for the CIO, that the Communist Party was interested and was offering to finance him. He did the job, but turned out within six months on the Pacific coast as a Communist Party agent to set up an organization having paid officers in every port, a monthly magazine and other trappings.

"In 1937, John L. Lewis chartered the ACA for the purpose of organizing telegraph and telephone communications, furnishing them with a check for $100,000 in 15 months.

"Four witnesses have already testified under oath before the Dies committee that Hoyt S. Haddock, Communist Party boss of the Pacific Coast, Rathborne and others were members of the Communist Party. From the record that the organization of Ford started in 1933 until the present time, Lewis' organization has been completely controlled and has affiliated with each and every Communist front committee, including the Spanish Medical Aid Unity League down to the Committee for the Relief of Spanish Loyalists."

CANADIAN SEAMEN STRIKE

Toronto, Can.—Approximately 4,500 members of the Canadian Seamen's Union in 15 lake ports struck for wage increases, shorter work hours, larger crews, union representation aboard ship and the closed shop. Union officials said the walkout tied up about 270 lake ports.

News Briefs

ELECTRICAL WORKERS DENY BOYCOTT CHARGE

New York, N. Y.—Vigorously denying that it exercises a boycott of equipment made by employers of the National Electrical Manufacturers' Association, attorneys for Local 3 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers this week filed an 800-page brief in the "restraint of trade" case now pending in the federal courts in New York. The union asked that the manufacturers' plea for a permanent injunction and a declaratory judgment be denied.

Harold Stern, counsel for the union, said the court had no jurisdiction to act in the case in view of the Norris-La Guardia Act.

90,000 MORE BUILDING WORKERS TO GET JOBS

Washington, D. C.—The United States Housing Authority announced that more than 90,000 building trades mechanics and laborers, on a weekly average, will be employed on the sites of 260 slum-clearance and low-rent public housing projects aided by the USHA in 132 localities by next June. The weekly payroll on these jobs will total about $3,000,000.

More than 80,000 jobs for building trades workers on the sites of 190 projects under construction will be completed up to April 1 had been provided by the USHA program with wages totaling approximately $27,000,000.

ELECTRICAL WORKERS SIGN UP VA. UTILITY

Washington, D. C.—The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, A. F. of L. affiliate, reported that it had negotiated agreements with five of the six divisions of the Virginia Public Service Company, one of the largest public utilities in the South, covering a third of the State. The five divisions included in the agreements take in approximately 90 per cent of the company's properties. Wage increases, vacations with pay, seniority rights and other improved working conditions are provided in the contracts.

LIFE INSURANCE AGENTS WIN ANOTHER ELECTION

Washington, D. C.—At a consent election conducted by National Labor Relations Board here agents of the Virginia Life and Casualty Insurance Company in the District of Columbia voted unanimously for the American Federation of Labor as their exclusive bargaining agent with reference to working conditions, hours, and rates of remuneration, George L. Russ, president of the Industrial and Ordinary Insurance Agents' Council, A. F. of L. affiliate, announced.

Rail Board Certifies A. F. of L. Red Caps

Washington, D. C.—The National Mediation Board announced the certification of Red Cap Employees Union No. 18829, A. F. of L. affiliate, to represent red caps (baggagemen) employed by the Ogden Union Railway and Depot Company. The certification was made following an election in which the ushers voted unanimously for the A. F. of L. union.

LUGGAGE WORKERS WIN STRIKE IN PETERSBURG

Petersburg, Va.—The strike of 1200 trunk and luggage workers of Petersburg against the American Fibre Chair Company, which was called on January 29 by the Petersburg Union Local No. 52 of the International Ladies' Handbag, Pocketbook and Novelty Workers' Union, A. F. of L. affiliate, was settled on April 11, when the company signed a union contract providing for collective bargaining with the check-off system of dues, a general wage increase for all luggage workers, the 40-hour week with a higher rate for overtime after 40 hours, and arbitration of all disputes, including discharge cases, with a permanent arbitrator agreed upon for the term of the contract, I. Lederman, general organizer of the International Union reported.

The exact amount of the wage increase will be decided after consultation between the company and a union committee.

The arbitrator agreed upon by both sides is Henry G. Ellis, Superintendent of Schools of Petersburg.

All workers who have been on strike are to be reinstated immediately to their former positions without any discrimination. The company is to dissolve its injunction against the strikers and the union agreed to withdraw its charges made against the company to the National Labor Relations Board.

The strike settlement was brought about by the intervention of Governor James H. Price of Virginia who called both sides to a conference over which he presided at the Governor's chambers in Richmond.

The strike aroused nation-wide interest. The strikers received moral and financial assistance from luggage workers in New York, Philadelphia, Newark, Pittsburgh, Chicago and Racine and from many pocketbook locals and the labor movement generally.

President William Green of the American Federation of Labor issued a special appeal to the A. F. of L. unions for financial assistance which brought in several thousand dollars. The Virginia State Federation of Labor and its affiliated central bodies and local unions took a deep interest in the strike and rendered great assistance.

President Green Charges Lewis Plans to Become United States Dictator With Communist Aid

The Indictment Against Lewis

(Following are the charges and challenges hurled at John L. Lewis by President Wm. Green of the A. F. of L. at a mass meeting of General Motors workers in Flint, Mich.)

I charge that the leader of the CIO today is secretly planning a political revolution comparable to that which made Stalin the dictator of Soviet Russia, a political putsch comparable to that which made Hitler the dictator of Germany.

I charge that this man, suffering from delusions of grandeur, is secretly desirous of becoming the dictator of the United States of America.

If this is not his motive, I challenge him then to explain why he is playing the game of the Communist Party in this country.

I challenge him to explain the startling coincidence of the simultaneous and vicious attacks launched by him and the Communist Party against the President of the United States the moment the President denounced the Stalin-Hitler pact.

I challenge him to explain why he has never denounced that pact and the brutal, indefensible invasion of Poland, Finland and other neutral countries by the dictators of Europe.

I challenge him to explain why he has placed Communists in control of CIO unions, including the CIO publicity bureau.

I challenge him to explain why he denounced the "G" men of the Department of Justice the moment they started investigating the Moscow connections of Communist agents in this country.

I challenge him to explain why he has so bitterly assailed all the leading candidates for the Presidency of the United States in both major parties.

I challenge him to explain why he has actively sought to stir up discontent among the under-privileged groups in this country.

Finally, I challenge him to explain why he is threatening to marshal these groups into a third party unless he hopes to ride into power as the dictator of America with their support.

Woll Visions Labor Halting War Material Shipments to Germany

Washington, D. C.—If shipments of war materials from the United States to countries continue organized labor may well consider making use of its economic power to prevent the flow of such materials, Matthew Woll, a vice president of the American Federation of Labor, asserted here in an address before the International Association Union of Operating Engineers, an A. F. of L. affiliate.

"Such a contingency as that will happen to us if totalitarianism is victorious in Europe," asserted Mr. Woll, who is also president of the Union Label Trades Department of the American Federation of Labor.

The United States should not actually join the war but should lend all assistance "short of war" to England and France who were fighting for democracy, he said.

Mr. Woll spoke of the German invasion of Denmark and Norway and declared that "two democracies have been wiped out overnight." He remarked that "God only knows" how long Great Britain and France will be permitted to defend the democracies."

In prefacing his remarks about the war, Mr. Woll pointed to large increases of various articles exported to some European countries. It was in this connection that he said exporters now shipping such materials abroad should cease doing so and if they did not then organized labor "should consider going one step further and withhold manufacturing and transporting such materials."

George Meany, secretary-treasurer of the A. F. of L., advised the convention to keep out of politics and recalled that Samuel Gompers had said it would be time for labor to "enter the political arena" when it was on the way to solving its economic problems.

Criticizing the National Labor Relations Board, Mr. Meany accused it of seeking to destroy craft organizations. However, the A. F. L. was stronger today, he said, than when the Labor Relations Act was adopted.

He cautioned labor against depending on the government for support rather than its own economic strength. In Italy, Germany and Russia, he said, labor "is dependent upon the government and today the unions were under complete government control.

A.F.L. UNIONS CERTIFIED AS BARGAINING AGENCIES

Washington, D. C.—The National Labor Relations Board announced the following certifications of American Federation of Labor unions:

United Saw, File and Steel Products Workers of America, Local No. 22254, as the sole collective bargaining agency selected by a majority of the employes in the production and maintenance departments of Herrington & Sons, Incorporated, Philadelphia, Pa., following a secret ballot election held March 29, resulting in a count of 1098 votes for the AFL union to 717 for the CIO.

Pattern Makers League of North America as the sole collective bargaining agency designated and selected by a majority of the pattern shop employes of the Hershey Corporation, Greensburg, Pa., following a secret ballot election resulting in 16 votes for the Pattern Makers League and 11 votes for the CIO.

Lodge 31, International Association of Machinists, as the sole collective bargaining agency selected by a majority of the employes of Armour and Company, Omaha, Nebraska, upon the basis of a secret ballot election resulting in a count of 6 votes for the AFL affiliate and no votes for the CIO.

Commercial Telegraphers Union, Marine Division, as the sole collective bargaining agency selected by a majority of the radio operators on the Socony-Vacuum Oil Co., Inc., New York City, on its ocean-going tankers operating under the American flag. Board action was based upon a recent consent collective bargaining election resulting in a count of 20 votes for the AFL union to 7 votes for the CIO Commercial Telegraphers Association, Marine Division.

Pattern Makers Association of Indianapolis and Vicinity, affiliated with the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America as the sole collective bargaining representatives selected by a majority of the pattern makers and pattern makers' apprentices, excluding supervisory employes, employed by the Indianapolis Pattern Company, Indianapolis, Ind. The company conceded that a majority of the employes in the appropriate unit were members in good standing in the Association and the League.

FILIPINO CITIZENSHIP OPPOSED BY A. F. OF L.

Washington, D. C.—Determined opposition by the American Federation of Labor to the CIO sponsored bill, Senate 2999, to grant citizenship to Filipinos, Puerto Ricans, Hawaiians and Panamanians, granting naturalization privileges to Filipinos was voiced by Paul Scharrenberg, A. F. of L. representative at a hearing before the Senate Immigration Committee. Said Mr. Scharrenberg:

"The Exclusion Law of 1924 which bars Japanese ineligible to citizenship has been, and continues to be, America's legal fortification against the hordes of Asia, who would overwhelm us if we permitted them to do so.

"California's living standards, especially, have been in constant danger since the early days from organized migrations of these nationalities—Chinese, Hindus, Japanese, and Filipinos.

"Each separate infiltration, as it progressed, became a menace and has been fought with determination by the people. The Chinese were excluded in 1882, the Hindus in 1917, the Japanese in 1924, and the Filipinos in 1936 by the Philippines Independence Act, which limits their coming to 50 per year until 1946, when the act becomes effective. After that time they will be entirely barred just like all other Asiatics.

"If citizenship were to be granted to Filipinos, it necessarily must be granted also to all other Asiatics as well. There can be no discrimination. Then the exclusion measure would be nullified immediately, since everyone would then become eligible to citizenship."

UNEMPLOYMENT ABOLITION IS SOUGHT BY CHURCHMEN

A national conference to form "a united will to abolish unemployment" has been called to meet in Washington, D. C., next June 6-6-6 by representatives of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ, the National Catholic Welfare Conference and the National Conference of American Rabbis. Representatives of these three national religious organizations said the conference would "unite in an effort to abolish unemployment by arousing the conscience of the nation to the paramount necessity of its solution."

The plans for the conference were announced by Rev. James Myers, leader of the Industrial Division of the Federal Council of Churches, Monsignor John A. Ryan, director of the Social Action Department of the Catholic Conference and Rabbi Edward N. Israel, representing the American Rabbis.